

Teaching Reading

Reading is fundamental to all instruction, and success in school is directly related to reading fluency. All teachers in all subjects at all grade levels must know basic strategies for teaching reading or how to teach compensational strategies for poor readers.



► Making Textbook Accommodations

- Provide students with an outline of the reading material in advance. Allow students to take notes on the outline while others read aloud.
- Give the students a list of the discussion questions for preview. This helps students to focus on the most important material.
- Preview and discuss pictures, diagrams and charts with the students before reading. This will help students to have better skills in discerning visual clues. It also provides background information on which to build understanding.
- Read the text aloud to a small group of students, while the remainder of the students read silently. Include students with disabilities in the small group.

TIP: Vary the groups so that students become familiar with small-group procedures and get to know other students in the class.

- Assign students into small cooperative groups and allow them to read aloud. Use these strategies:
 - **Choral reading.** Students read aloud together with you or on their own as a group. This will help them develop reading skills and learn sight words. With choral reading, all students actively participate. Keep passages short.
 - **Cloze reading.** In this procedure, you read aloud and then randomly stop, allowing the students to fill in the missing words.
 - **Buddy reading.** This options works for pairs of students to read together. Try these approaches:
 - Buddy #1 reads the sentence. Buddy #2 echoes the sentence, while #1 points to the words.
 - Buddy #1 reads the first sentence, Buddy #2 the next sentence, and so on.
 - Buddies #1 and #2 read sentences together.

Many students benefit when they can preview materials before you present a lesson.

- Allow students to take home audio cassettes of the material before it is read to the class. This will allow students to become familiar with the story, the plot, characters, etc.
- Provide time for students to work with an adult to discuss photos, illustrations, captions, headings and chapter questions. This builds background information, especially if new concepts are related to previously learned concepts.
- Review bold-faced print, italicized words, headings and subheadings with students. Read and define words in context of the textbook.
- Give students a list of discussion questions, and ask them to skim through the text and find the answers. Include page-number-location clues.
- Offer sets of textbooks for home use. Before students take the books home, explain how to locate main ideas and keywords and how to use the glossary and appendices.

TIP: If you have color-coded textbooks, these are excellent for home use.

► Teaching Reading Comprehension

- Use visual imagery to increase reading comprehension. Ask the students to close their eyes while you read short, descriptive passages. Stop frequently and ask the students to create a picture in their minds. For example, if you are reading a simple

passage about a child playing in the ocean, ask the students: What do you see? Hear? What can you smell? How does the sky look? What does the child look like? What is the child doing? Practice these skills with the students frequently, and encourage them to use this visualization when they read on their own.

- When comprehension is difficult, reduce the quantity of material students must read in one sitting.
- Provide students with a list of vocabulary words and key points that they must learn. Include items that will be on assessments so that the students will pay special attention to these areas.
- When students are reading silently or aloud in small groups, ask them to stop frequently and paraphrase to the group members the information learned.
- Allow students to record passages on tape and then listen to them as needed.
- Graphics organizers help students analyze and understand what they have read. Good ones to use here would be
 - Chain of Events organizer (documents a sequence of events)
 - Compare and Contrast organizer (compares attributes of characters or events in a story)
 - Fact and Opinion organizer (helps to classify information)
 - Story Map organizer (helps to clarify story line and should include main characters, settings, main events and conclusion).

These and many more are available for free at various web sites and students can create their own.

- Have students illustrate the main idea of a story and then write a short sentence describing it.

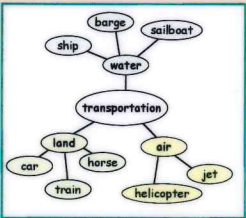
► Teaching Vocabulary

- Most new vocabulary words are in the context of daily reading and writing. Furnish in advance a weekly list of both vocabulary and boldface words you expect students to learn. Define the words in the context of the text, instead of in isolation—this avoids double meanings.

TIP: Students can use this list to preview upcoming work and to study vocabulary at home.

- Create "vocabulary review" index cards with definitions. On the front of the card, the student writes the new vocabulary word along with the definitions. On the back of the card, the student writes two sentences. Sentence #1 should include the word as it relates to the curriculum and sentence two may be free choice.
- Encourage students to participate in free vocabulary puzzles and games—plus hundreds of other activities that enhance vocabulary mastery—at www.vocabulary.com, the interactive web site of the Vocabulary University used by over 17,000 schools as well as home schools and ESI programs. Materials are also available here for your download.
- Create a thesaurus. Give students a word list and have them list as many synonyms as possible. Enhance the exercise by asking them to include antonyms. Students can also add their personal vocabulary list to create their own thesauruses.

- Have students select a word and create a Word Web. Word Webs are diagrams that show examples, definitions and categories. Example on right: Students can add color to their Word Webs to make them more readable.



- Make a Word Wall with synonyms for overused words. This helps students to expand their choices and not select the same words all the time. Place large pieces of tag board on a wall, each with an overused word written in large letters. Have students write synonyms for these words and tack them onto the boards (index cards work well for this). For example, "said" is overused; words that might appear on the Word Wall are declared, exclaimed, roared, moaned, cried, stated, murmured, affirmed, yelled, and whispered, among

dozens more.

- Select a picture or an object for the class to view. Have the students write as many words as they can that describe the picture or object. Even a simple object, like a pen, could have multiple descriptors: long, narrow, pointed, blue, etc.

► Strategies for Non-readers

- Provide books with similar subjects at a lower reading level. These texts will often have more pictures, which you can discuss with the students. Also, look for other media (e.g., videos, DVDs, etc.) that present similar content.
- Highlight alternating lines in the reading text—this helps students keep their place during reading.
- Use as many visual aids as you can. Show posters and pictures; create bulletin boards; find resources online.
- Provide books with larger print—these will have fewer words per page.

Helping the Hearing-impaired Student

- Seat the student near you and so that the student can see the faces of as many classmates as possible, as hearing-impaired students rely on lip reading.

TIP: Desks arranged in a semi-circle will help; you can also set the student in a swivel chair.

- During reading lessons, pair the student with a peer who can redirect the student if he loses his place while others are reading aloud.
- Use visual signals to get the student's attention when reading aloud.
- If the student has better hearing in one ear, seat the student accordingly.
- Use your hands when speaking to increase student's understanding.

Helping the Vision-impaired Student

- Keep the classroom well-lit.
- Partner the student with a peer for support, clarification and redirection.
- Provide audiocassettes that duplicate the textbook. Create the tapes on machines that allow for variable speeds—this will allow the student to increase the speed as auditory skills become refined. Your local Society for the Blind may have services and resources that will help you.
- Tape record your assignments so that students can replay them as needed.

Assessing Learning

Assessment should be on-going.

The guidelines below will help you when you create assessments.

- Begin each assessment with several easy questions or tasks.
- In your written directions, use one direction per sentence—e.g., "Read each sentence. Select the word the best completes the sentence. Put a check by that word."
- Leave ample space between problems.
- Avoid making tests that look cluttered—this visual "noise" can distract students.
- Stay away from the words "never," "not," "sometimes," and "always."
- For some students, revise your test so that multiple-choice items have only three choices and not four as in standard questions.
- Individual portfolios are significant alternate ways to assess students. Provide folders in which students can collect and save their work. Students, parents and staff can easily note progress over time. Students can write reflective pieces about the work in the portfolio and the progress they've made.